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Cold Bath

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From the numerous subjects which the field of Medicine presents I have chosen for the following essay the Utility of the Cold Bath in Fevers—

1st. Of the Bilious Yellow Fever, during the prevalence of this fell and ravaging monster in Charleston S.C. in the years 1817 & 1819. I had an excellent opportunity of seeing the various methods of treatment pursued in the Hospitals of Charleston, one of which was entirely for the reception of the poor with Yellow Fever, I had likewise the advantage ~~the advantage~~ of seeing the practice of my preceptor. The use of the Cold Bath constituted a very important part of the treatment, From the above sources I drew the following observations.

That only in the first stages of the disease ~~[illegible]~~ the

That the Cold Bath was only admissable in the first stages of the disease

That venesection, an Emetic or Cathartic should precede the cold bath,

That in the more advanced stages it was always injurious.

That it should only be administered during the Paroxysm and when the heat was steadily above the natural standard.

I have selected the following cases as fully shewing the efficacy and safety of the remedy—

Case 1st

Miss A. J. Eleven years of age had the first symptoms of Fever at Eleven o'clock, A.M. About three P.M. my preceptor was called in, Pulse 130, great heat & thirst, ordered a cathartic of Calomel & Jalap, which operated freely; At five P.M. ordered the Cold Bath, She was placed in the Bathing Tub and the water as cold as could be got dashed upon her untill she complained of universal chillness, she was then taken out & wrapped

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warmly in blankets. In about five minutes her face flushed, Her pulse fuller & slower, in twenty minutes she perspired freely. Never after had she the slightest paroxysm of Fever. In this case we see the solution of disease by one application of the Cold Bath—

Case Second

A Servant of Mr. W.'s was taken about three in the morning, At nine my preceptor was sent for, He found him labouring under the symptoms of yellow Fever, his pulse full frequent & tense, ordered him to lose ℥xx of blood and a cathartic of x & yy which operated four or five times. At three o'clock visited him the second time, he ordered the Cold Bath, the management of which was left to me with directions to repeat it if necessary, that is if I found the heat and action not much reduced by the application. I had the patient placed in a Bathing Tub and the water dashed upon him untile he was completely chilled, when I had him taken out and wrapped up very warmly. I waited for sometime expecting a solution of the disease by a

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diaphoresis, but I was disappointed, He began to complain of the intolerable heat, his pulse one hundred & Ten, He was again placed in the Tub and the water dashed upon him untile he could bear the uneasy sensations no longer; he was then taken out and wrapped up, after a short space of time much was I gratified by an universal and gentle perspiration supervening, this was followed by an abatement of the most distressing symptoms as thirst, heat, &c, he soon fell asleep and woke completely refreshed, a cathartic was then ordered which operated freely. On the third day he was convalescent and progressed rapidly towards health. This case shows that the remedy should be repeated untill there be some decided impression made upon the system—

Case Third

J. P. a stranger to the city had the first symptoms of Yellow Fever at Nine O'Clock A.M. at Ten acquired a permit for his admission to the Hospital established

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a short distance from the city, During his conveyance to that place, It rained very hard, the heaviest fall of water we had had during the summer, being in an open chair he was wet thoroughly, the Chill produced was extreme, immediately on his admission he was wrapped up warmly for the purpose of assisting the reaction of the system - a Cathartic of Calomel & Jalap was given, soon he perspired freely the cathartic after this operated five or six times - The next day he was declared convalescent. On the third day he was dismissed from the hospital nearly reestablished in his pristine health The Cathartic here could scarcely be supposed to have been productive of the Cure, The patients gratitude was due to God alone -

Case Fourth

A servant of Mr J - strong & Plethoric constitution was attacked about twelve at night at 8 next morning a Physician was called in, his pulse one hundred and forty full & tense, The Physician ordered

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Pint of Blood to be drawn, and after this the Cold Bath which was accordingly done, in five hours he was completely free from fever and never after had the slightest attack,

Case Fifth

One of my servants was attacked by this fever, as he was of a Robust habit, his pulse full, frequent & tense, I detracted thirty ounces of Blood, gave him a cathartic of Calomel and Jalap which operated well, I gave the Cold Affusion, which completely arrested the progress of the disease, and on the second day he was convalescent

I have selected the above cases from a vast number as best showing the efficacy & safety of this simple and invaluable remedy -

The Cold Bath by Affusion appears to act by making a powerful impression on the whole system, driving the blood from the external parts into the deep seated vessels and reaction of the system produces a solution of disease by a diaphoresis -

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I am well aware that Dr. Rush was against this practice. He states that the cold bath was always productive of mischief in this city. Perhaps this may be accounted for by the difference in the climates of the two places.
The use of the Cold Bath in Yellow Fever, has the support of very many respectable authorities.
Dr. O'Driscol a respectable and successful physician was a strenuous advocate for the Cold affusion. He employed it very extensively and strongly recommended the remedy to the practitioners of Charleston. He declared that he never lost a single patient, when called in the early stage of the disease, and that his principal remedy was the Cold Bath.
Dr. O'Leary who attended the 70th. Regiment at Antigua, says, that most of the sick were affected with Yellow Fever, and the mortality had been very great, but on his employing the cold affusion agreeably to the rules laid down by Dr. Currie very few died afterwards.
Dr. Thomas states, that by employing the Cold Affusion on the very onset we may arrest the progress and interrupt

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the morbid actions of yellow fever, and even in cases of some days continuance we shall be able by means of it to abstract heat, induce sleep and recruit the animal powers.

There are several other authorities of no less weight than those whom I have already cited. But it would swell my thesis to an unwarrantable length to quote them. I shall therefore go on to state the effect of the cold affusion in other diseases.

In Putrid Fever, Typhus Gravior of Nosologists, the cold affusion has been prescribed with great and decisive advantage by some of the most eminent practitioners. Dr Currie of Liverpool, states, that this fever having made its appearance in a regiment quartered in that town, he had the men drawn up and examined. Seventeen of whom he found with symptoms of it upon them: These he subjected to the cold affusion once or twice a day, In fifteen the fever was extinguished. He states likewise that out of thirty two who went through this disease only two died, and in these two cases the cold affusion was not tried; the others recovered by means of the remedy. He found the most advantageous time of using it, was when the exacerbation was at its

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height, and when the heat was steadily above what is natural. Dr Thomas speaks very highly of the remedy and states, that he would advise a general suffusion of the patient as soon as the nature of the disease was clearly ascertained: stating that the good effects of this mode of practice he had often experienced.

Mr. Marshall states, that sixty cases out of sixty four in which the cold affusion was at an early period used, the disease was arrested. Mr Marshall scarcely used any other remedy: This testimony is certainly very much in favour of the superiority of the cold affusion over every other remedy. Even in the advanced stages of this fever, the remedy has been attended with advantage. It has been used by some practitioners on the twelfth day with safety and success; it appeases agitation and restlessness, dissipates delirium, and appears to snatch the patient from impending dissolution.

In the hot stage of Intermittent Fever, I have seen the remedy employed with decisive advantage. It completely arrested the progress of the disease

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by exciting a free diaphoresis, which is well known to be a desideratum, and all of our remedies tend to this purpose in this stage of disease. In this, as in any other case it must be borne in mind, that the heat must be above the natural standard. Dr. Worthington's testimony is in favour of this plan of cure. He says, that after the accession of the hot fit, three or four pails of cold water being dashed upon the patient, the hot stage is either entirely removed or rendered much milder. The remedy most generally produces a mild diaphoresis.

Case

E. J. had intermittent for twelve months. A great variety of remedies had in succession been employed for the removal of the disease but unsuccessfully. When the allernation of the warm and cold baths was determined upon. During the cold stage the warm bath was given, which accelerated the approach of the hot stage. As soon as this was completely established, two or three pails of cold water was dashed upon him; he was then taken out and wrapped up warmly;

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a gentle perspiration supervened and he fell asleep, A repetition of this practice entirely cured him. Several times have I seen the same method of treatment attended with complete success. Dr Thomas mentions, that he employed the cold affusion with advantage.

In the early stages of Scarlatina has the remedy likewise been attended with success, we have the following authorities in support of it. Dr Currie mentions that he found the affusion of cold water to extinguish incipient scarlatina in repeated instances, so as to prevent either efflorescence or any affection of the throat from taking place. The plan he followed was, if called in the earliest stage to strip the patient naked and dash four or five gallons of the coldest water over him: he only employed it when the patient felt steadily hot we have likewise the authority of Dr Thomas and of other physicians ~~in support of this practice~~.

In Rheumatic affections, the cold bath has sometimes afforded relief. I have taken the following case from the Medical Recorder. A person was subject to Rheumatism.

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when attacked his remedy was, to go to a neighbouring river, strip himself and wade about in the water untill he was thoroughly chilled, when he came out, he hastened home and went immediately to bed. This practice he followed at all times of the year with uniform success. May not the happy result of this case warrant us in the imitation of the mode of cure.

The Cold Bath has been employed with success in calming the fury of madness, we have a case related by Dr Hupp of its complete success in Mania a Potu. Being baffled in all his attempts of affording his patient relief; he ordered the Cold Bath to be tried. The insanity returning with great violence, the patient was thrown headlong into the cold bath, he came out calm and nearly rational. The same practice was directed to be repeated, the next day being as furious as ever, it was repeated for five different times, He became perfectly calm & rational in the bath, and has continued so ever since. The cold bath has been prescribed in a variety of diseases, I deem those mentioned sufficient to prove its value